

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01675 052121Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 1675

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, CA

SUBJ: GOOSE BAY CLOSURE

SUMMARY: US-CANADIAN OFFICIALS MET ON APR 29 TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON GOOSE BAY CLOSURE. GOC PLANS MINIMAL CIVILIAN OPERATION AT GOOSE AFTER USAF DEPARTURE. USAF INDICATED CONTINUING NEED FOR MUCH EQUIPMENT AND PLANT ON STANDBY BASIS. EMBASSY SUGGESTS GOC SHOULD BE MADE TO PAY LARGER PORTION OF COSTS. END SUMMARY.

1. USAF AND EMBASSY OFFICERS MET ON APR 29 WITH EXTAFF, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND CANADIAN FORCES PERSONNEL TO DISCUSS GOOSE BAY CLOSURE. MEETING WAS ARRANGED TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND WAS NOT A NEGOTIATING SESSION. USAF GAVE BROAD-BRUSH PICTURE OF WHAT IT ANTICIPATES WILL BE ITS REQUIREMENTS AFTER LEASE HAS ENDED, AND PROVIDED GENERAL TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL. CANADIANS DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE ANY PROBLEM WITH USAF SUGGESTION OF 90-DAY EXTENSION (UNTIL SEPT 1976) FOR FINAL CLOSURE.

2. IN DISCUSSING REQUIRMENTS FOR VARIOUS LEVELS OF OPERATIONS BY SAC, MAC, TAC AND AFSC, USAF INDICATED THAT IT WOULD NEED FACILITIES AT GOOSE MOSTLY IN
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 01675 052121Z

THE EVENT OF A MAJOR WAR, IN THE EVENT OF A REGIONAL

CRISIS SUCH AS MIDDLE EAST, AND FOR ROUTINE TRAINING EXERCISES. AGREEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE REACHED BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, PRESUMABLY BY EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES, FOR SPECIAL TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS (E.G. AVAILABILITY OF SPECIAL JET FUEL). USAF DESCRIBED PLANS FOR PHASE-DOWN, DISPOSAL OF USAF ASSETS INCLUDING EXCESS FUEL, AND NEED FOR MAINTENANCE OF PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS RUNWAY, NAVAIDS, RAMPS, CONTROL TOWERS AND THE LIKE. USAF INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO SEEK FACILITY CONTRACTS OF UNDEFINED NATURE TO MAINTAIN BUILDINGS, HANGARS, FUEL SYSTEM, RAMPS AND MAINTENANCE SHOP AREAS. USAF ALSO POINTED OUT MUCH WORK REMAINED TO BE DONE TO IDENTIFY RECOVERABLE ASSETS, PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS, TYPE OF COSTING OPERATION AND SIMILAR MATTERS. GOC OFFICIALS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HOW USAF INTENDED TO FIGURE COSTS.

3. COMMENT: A) IT IS EVIDENT TO EMBASSY THAT GOC HAS DRAWN UP PLAN FOR USE OF GOOSE BAY AS PURELY CIVILIAN AIRPORT. IT HAS FIGURED, OR WILL FIGURE, COSTS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH OPERATION. ANY COSTS ABOVE THAT MINIMUM GOC WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SEEK TO PASS ON TO USG.

B) USAF RESIDUAL REQUIREMENTS ABOVE AND BEYOND GOC'S MINIMUM NEEDS INCLUDE MAINTENANCE OF EMPTY HANGARS, EMERGENCY BILLETTS FOR 300-400 PERSONNEL, SUPPORT FACILITIES, FUEL STORAGE REQUIREMENTS, NAVAIDS, CONTROL TOWER, RUNWAY CLEARANCE (PARTICULARLY OF SNOW) AND MAINTENANCE. WITH ALL OF THIS TO BE DONE BY CANADIAN CIVILIAN PERSONNEL UNDER CONTRACT IN THE ISOLATED GOOSE BAY ENVIRONMENT, THESE RESIDUAL USAF REQUIREMENTS WOULD BE VERY COSTLY, POSSIBLY NOT APPRECIABLY BELOW PRESENT COSTS.

C) WE QUESTION WHETHER THE UNILATERAL USES THE US IS LIKELY TO BE PERMITTED BY THE GOC TO MAKE OF THE BASE CAN JUSTIFY THE PAYMENT BY THE US OF SUCH AN APPARENTLY HIGH PRICE. EXATTAFF OFFICER COMMENTED PRIVATELY TO EMBOFF THAT GOC WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 01675 052121Z

NO PROBLEM WITH USAF USE OF BASE IN EVENT MAJOR WAR OR IF CONTINGENCY REQUIRED NATO OR OTHER SIMILAR MULTI-LATERAL PARTICIPATION. HOWEVER, IN A "MID-EAST

TYPE SITUATION," WHERE US ACTING UNILATERALLY TO IMPLEMENT US POLICY, EXATTAFF OFFICIAL SAID GOC MIGHT WELL BE RELUCTANT TO PERMIT USE OF GOOSE. THUS, IF US WERE TO PAY ALL COSTS ABOVE NOT MINIMUM NEEDS,

TO THE EXTENT THAT US WILLINGNESS TO PAY WAS BASED ON OUR ASSUMED ABILITY TO USE THE BASE FOR SUCH UNILATERAL CONTINGENCIES, WE COULD WELL END UP PAYING FOR A PRODUCT WHOSE DELIVERY WOULD BE DENIED US WHEN WE NEEDED IT.

D) FACED WITH THIS POSSIBILITY, IT WOULD SEEM TO US THAT OUR NEGOTIATING STRATEGY SHOULD BE TO INDICATE TO THE CANADIANS THAT WE CONSIDER THE BASE TO BE OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE FOR USE IN NATO CONTINGENCIES UP TO AND INCLUDING THE OUTBREAK OF A MAJOR WAR AND OTHER POSSIBLE CONTINGENCIES WHERE US AND GOC NATIONAL INTERESTS WOULD COINCIDE. (EMBASSY NOTES THAT BRITISH RAF CONSIDERS GOOSE ONE OF THE BEST BASES AVAILABLE TO IT FOR TRAINING AND USES IT REGULARLY. PERHAPS BRITISH, AS NATO ALLY, COULD BE REMINDED THAT THEY HAVE VESTED INTEREST IN ITS MAINTENANCE AND SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO ITS UPKEEP, OR AT LEAST SUPPORT A DEMARCHE TO CANADIANS THAT LATTER SHOULD ASSUME LARGER BURDEN). SINCE FOR NATO OR OTHER MUTUAL-INTEREST USE THE US WOULD BE PROVIDING THE PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES TEMPORARILY REQUIRED TO

MEET THE CONTINGENCY REQUIREMENT, THE GOC SHOULD BE WILLING TO BEAR THE COSTS OF THE PERMANENT FACILITIES REQUIRED AS PART OF THEIR SHARE OF THE MUTUAL NATO DEFENSE BURDEN.

E) IT WOULD NOT BE INAPPROPRIATE AT THIS POINT OF NEGOTIATIONS TO EMPHASIZE TO GOC THAT WE DO NOT CONSIDER THE SHARE OF THE COMMON DEFENSE BURDEN WHICH THEY ARE PRESENTLY BEARING TO BE COMMENSURATE WITH EITHER THEIR ABILITY TO PAY OR THE DEGREE OF SECURITY THEY RECEIVE FROM THE ALLIANCE. WE COULD THEN INDICATE TO THEM THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO SHARE THE COSTS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 OTTAWA 01675 052121Z

OF THE PERMANENT FACILITIES IF THE GOC WERE WILLING TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE THAT THE US CAN USE THE FACILITIES FOR UNILATERAL CONTINGENCIES, OUR SHARE TO BE COMPUTED ON THE BASIS OF AN AGREED GUESSTIMATE OF THE PERCENTAGE OF BASE OPERATIONS LIKELY TO BE UNILATERAL.

F) EMBASSY AWARE THAT ABOVE SUGGESTION MAY BE DEPARTURE FROM OTHER AGREEMENTS (E.G. COLD LAKE FACILITY). HOWEVER, THIS SHOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION TO REFRAIN FROM SEEKING ADDITIONAL CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR GOOSE. CANADA WILLINGLY PROVIDED MUCH VALUABLE SUPPORT WHILE SAC WING STATIONED AT GOOSE; SAC DEPARTURE SHOULD NOT BE REASON FOR GOC TO CEASE SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATION. MINIMAL CIVILIAN OPERATION IT APPARENTLY ENVISIONS SHOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED

AS ADEQUATE CONTRIBUTION.

G) THIS MESSAGE CLEARED WITH DAO/OTTAWA.
JOHNSON

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